



Overview of Executive Business Course (EBC) University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

The U.S. Navy, like many large private-sector organizations, often finds that its new 'general management' executives have not been adequately prepared for the broad and complex decision arena that they now occupy. It is increasingly the case that successful senior military officers upon being assigned to top executive program management and policy-making assignments find that they are ill prepared in terms of knowledge or skills needed to succeed in those assignments. The Executive Business Course (EBC) is intended to provide some important elements of this preparation.

The EBC course provides a collaborative and powerfully engaging opportunity for Admirals, Generals and members of the Senior Executive Service to heighten awareness and deepen personal insights related to innovation, business transformation and financial management. Through the presentation of cutting edge business concepts and best practices, the course challenges participants to test their assumptions and discover new possibilities. Prominent speakers from private industry, government, defense, science and academia motivate participants to broaden their thinking and expand intellectual comfort zones through interaction with one another.

The course design is based on classic research by Mintzberg¹ on the roles undertaken by senior managers, which fall into three major groups: leadership/interpersonal, informational, and decision-making. Under the rubric of leadership, we focus on leading transformational change as well as effective utilization of human capital. The sessions on informational roles address the strategic use of information technology for achieving business objectives. Finally, the sessions on the decision-making roles of senior managers provide the financial and analytical tools required for making effective decisions at the flag officer level. A highlight of the course is a set of presentations by very senior leaders from the Department of the Navy, who provide strategic direction and inspiration to course participants. The faculty for the course are drawn from the faculty of the Kenan-Flagler Business School, a top business school and provider of executive education for many prominent business organizations.

The course is held at the Paul J. Rizzo Conference Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The Rizzo Center provides an ideal setting for executives to learn, reflect and plan for the strategic challenges of the 21st century. Set in a 28-acre wooded environment, the facility offers state-of-the-art classrooms, breakout rooms and instructional technology. The DuBose Home, a beautiful Georgian Revival house, serves as the social center for the complex, and provides elegant dining for 110 guests.

¹ Henry Mintzberg, *The Nature of Managerial Work*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1973)